



## State of Connecticut

### SENATE

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#### MEMBER

COMMERCE COMMITTEE  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 20, 2015

Chairmen Coleman and Tong and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee:

For the record, my name is Tony Hwang and I am state Senator of Connecticut's 28<sup>th</sup> District.

Through my testimony, I hope you will see that passage of SB 1108 is an essential step we must take as a state to better protect our children, teachers and administrators while they are in school.

Our schools have become targets. Districts throughout Connecticut are facing an increasing number of threats of violence against our schools, and this is not only driving up costs to our municipalities which must expend finite resources to thoroughly respond to and investigate them, it is having far-reaching and potentially devastating impacts on our children and the entire school community.

You will likely hear compelling and heart-wrenching testimony today from parents who have lost all sense of security and whose children continue to struggle with the fear and anxiety these threats cause. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of victims of each threat against a school. The impact is huge and incredibly damaging, and the penalties of our existing laws do not match the crime.

Connecticut needs to send a clear and powerful message: that we will not tolerate threats of violence against our schools. SB 1108 sends that message.

Under the proposal, a new section would be created within the state's existing threatening statutes, pertaining specifically to threats targeting schools. First-degree threatening would become a Class C felony and second-degree threatening would become a Class D felony; they are currently a Class D felony and Class A misdemeanor, respectively.

By establishing this special section of threatening statutes specifically for schools, changing the classification of these crimes and, in the process, strengthening the penalties, we will help foster a safe school environment and make meaningful progress to further our critical work of ensuring public safety remains priority number one in Connecticut.

We will show parents that we hear them loud and clear, and that their voices matter. We will demonstrate to our dedicated educational professionals that their safety and well-being is of paramount importance. We will convey our conviction and resolve to support our public safety officers. And, importantly, our action will show our children that there is nothing more important than their safety, education and well being.

At the same time, this law is very much about sending a message to anyone who may be contemplating making a threat against one of our schools. It is a serious offense, and you will face serious consequences.

I urge you to vote in support of SB 1108. Thank you for time and thoughtful consideration.

Kindly,

Tony Hwang  
28<sup>th</sup> District State Senator